



# FACT SHEET

## CAM-OR SUPERFUND SITE PROJECT UPDATE MARCH 1997

### INTRODUCTION

This is an update on the Cam-Or Superfund site, Westville, Indiana. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is continuing its investigation at Cam-Or and is sponsoring a public meeting at 7 p.m., Tuesday, March 4, at the Westville Town Hall, 353 Main St., Westville. As progress is made in determining the extent of contamination at the site, U.S. EPA will provide regular updates through fact sheets, letters, public meetings, and newspaper announcements.

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUPS

One of the ways communities can participate in site cleanup decisions is to form a Community Advisory Group (CAG). A CAG is comprised of 15 to 20 representatives with diverse interests. Its purpose is to provide a public forum for citizens to present and discuss their concerns related to the decision-making process.

CAG members typically run the meetings while participating in discussions, providing data to U.S. EPA on site issues, and sharing information with fellow community members.

Further information on CAGs will be discussed at the March 4 public meeting.

### BACKGROUND

The Cam-Or site is located on the north side of Indiana Highway 2 and a quarter mile west of U.S. Highway 421 in Westville, LaPorte County, Indiana. The 13-acre site is bordered to the east by three private homes; to the north by a country road and cultivated fields; to the west by an abandoned railroad easement and cultivated fields; and to the south by a drainage ditch, Highway 2, and private homes. Westville is located directly south of Cam-Or.

Cam-Or purchased the facility in 1976 and continued its operation through 1987. During this time, 11 unlined lagoons were used to store waste oils prior to undergoing the refinery process. During operations, oil and contaminated cooling water were released several times into the ditch south of the site with observed releases up to 20 miles downstream in Crooked Creek.

U.S. EPA began an emergency cleanup to address immediate threats after Cam-Or closed in 1987. Three biological wastewater treatment systems cleansed about 9.5 million gallons of contaminated water; polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-contaminated sludges from three lagoons were isolated and transferred into one lagoon; dike walls were reinforced; monitoring wells were installed and sampled; and samples were collected from 112 drums which were eventually removed from the site.

In 1989, U.S. EPA ordered several companies to treat acidic and PCB-contaminated sludges with lime; consolidate and place a clay cap over the “former” lagoon area; install and sample off-site ground water monitoring wells; and remove sludges from above-ground tanks used for waste oil storage. These companies, or “potentially responsible parties,” were determined to be legally responsible for the contamination because their waste was brought to Cam-Or during its period of operation.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

The potentially responsible parties are voluntarily doing some investigatory work with U.S. EPA and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) input. During the past year, this work has included:

- taking/analyzing samples from on-site soil;
- taking/analyzing samples from private wells;
- taking/analyzing samples from existing on- and off-site monitoring wells; and
- taking/analyzing samples from eight new ground-water monitoring wells.

Results have shown:

- a large area of soil, contaminated by several organic compounds including benzene, toluene, and trichloroethene (TCE), is present in the western portion of the site;
- a “floating layer” of petroleum compounds on top of the water table in the southwestern portion and immediately southwest of the site;
- ground-water contamination by several volatile organic compounds with 1, 4-dioxane which is a common solvent used in many consumer products such as paints, varnishes, cleaners, and detergents;
- no contamination in private wells southwest of the site, in the town’s municipal well, and in the northern-most supply well for the Westville Correction Facility; and
- an underground area of contamination, or “plume,” has moved about 1 mile southwest of the site and is at least several hundred feet wide.

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

U.S. EPA has several activities planned for this Spring. Beginning the week of March 10, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has been asked by U.S. EPA to install more monitoring wells, collect more on-and off-site soil samples, and assist with a “pump test” of the town’s test well. Such a test is beneficial when U.S. EPA is developing possible ground water cleanup options. For example, if a pump and treat system were selected, a pump test done this Spring will provide information on how many extraction wells (which pump contaminated water from the ground) would be needed and how many gallons of water should be pumped per minute to “capture” the contamination.

Throughout April and May, U.S. EPA and its contractor will resample all monitoring and private wells to determine any changes since the last sampling; to evaluate any trends; and to collect current data to assist in evaluating potential ground water cleanup options. In addition, residential soil samples will be collected to determine if any surface soils are contaminated from past air releases when the facility was operating. Water and sediment samples will be collected from Forbes Ditch and Crooked Creek to determine if past spills can affect aquatic life. Also, samples will be taken from the inside walls of several empty on-site storage tanks because this is the first step in the evaluation of demolition options. If there is oil or PCB residue inside these tanks, it would need to be removed before the tanks can be dismantled. All of this work will help U.S. EPA determine the type and exact amount of contamination present on and off site.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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An administrative record, which contains the information upon which the selection of a cleanup plan will be based, is available for review at the Westville Public Library, 153 Main St., Westville.

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